

Chairperson Arntzen and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to voice support for **HB 73**. My name is Rick Reisig. I am a CPA from Great Falls, and I am presently the Chairman of the Montana Board of Public Accountants, which is a regulatory board under the Montana Department of Labor & Industry.

The Montana Board of Public Accountants **supports** this bill and respectfully urges the bill be moved forward with a favorable recommendation from the Committee.

The mission of the Board of Public Accountants, like every other board under the umbrella of the Department of Labor & Industry, is to protect the public. Such protection is necessary as, in most cases, the public receiving services is at the mercy of the service provider as to whether or not the services provided were adequate. Boards are able to protect the public against poorly provided services from licensees. Boards have the legal authority to right a wrong that has been committed by that licensee. Presently, however, there is not an efficient mechanism to protect the public from poorly provided services from non-licensees. Boards do not have the legal authority to right a wrong committed by a non-licensure, or stop a non-licensure that continually provides bad service. There is a "protection gap" that can lead to harmful consequences for the unsuspecting public. This bill fills that gap.

Professional licensees go through rigorous training and testing to get into the profession, and must obtain continuing education to remain in the profession, in order for the public to receive the best possible product. Fees are paid by the licensee for this training, testing, and continuing education. Even with that, this bill does **not** place, and is not intended to place, any additional administrative burden on the non-licensure. Rather, the provisions of this bill are meant to apply **only** to those non-licensees for which a complaint has been filed by the public that feel they have been harmed. It allows Boards to provide protection to **all** of the public receiving services, not just those receiving services from licensees.

Thank you for your consideration of this bill. I would be happy to answer any questions any of you may have.



Rick Reisig, CPA
Chairman, Montana Board of Public Accountants